

**House Report 108-553 - DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2005**

ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF HON. DAVID OBEY

The Administration's steadfast refusal to appropriately plan for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and address critical shortfalls in our military was evident in its FY 2005 budget request for the Department of Defense. The President's budget included no funding for Iraq and Afghanistan operations, nor were funds requested to address known Army needs for additional manpower, protective gear, up-armored Humvees, and repair or replacement of weapons systems damaged in the war. Only recently did the Administration grudgingly admit the need for additional funds by submitting a \$25 billion 'emergency' supplemental.

The Administration's failure to budget for these ongoing efforts is irresponsible and reckless. It shows an unwillingness to make the difficult budgetary choices forced upon our nation by the President's Iraq policy, as well as a lack of respect for the American people who deserve to know the facts up front rather than on the installment plan.

The Committee did the right thing by including these funds, but based on analysis of the best available data from the Pentagon, operations in Iraq and Afghanistan will cost over \$76 billion over the next year. If the White House and the Majority Party had been willing to deal with real numbers, I had intended to offer an amendment during Full Committee consideration of this bill that would have increased funding for Iraq and Afghanistan by \$51.7 billion to fully fund the real expected cost of military operations and personnel costs in Iraq and Afghanistan for the entire year. I am inserting in the record the text of the amendment to show these real costs.

My amendment would have ensured that our forces in Iraq and Afghanistan had the supplies and support they require for their mission, and I am disappointed that the full cost of the war effort is not included as part of this bill. We have an obligation to our troops. We know that this obligation will cost more than \$25 billion. Congress will need to provide these additional funds soon, whether or not the President chooses to support the troops by requesting the funds himself.

The Committee accepted my amendment requiring the President to provide details on estimated costs for FY 2006-11 for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. This report will be due to the Congress on October 1, 2004, unless the President certifies that the costs cannot be divulged due to national security issues. I offered this amendment because the Administration owes the American people a full accounting of the cost of its policies in Iraq and Afghanistan over the next five years.

Since the beginning of military operations in Iraq, this Administration has said, 'Trust us. We know better.' The Committee did trust the Administration. We provided the Administration and its political appointees in the Pentagon with every dollar requested for Iraq. We provided them with unprecedented flexibility in spending those funds. There were no questions asked and no strings attached.

The Administration and the Pentagon have abused the trust that the Congress and the American people placed in them.

They marched to war based upon flawed intelligence and knowingly used that false intelligence to persuade Members of Congress and the public to support military action.

The Administration exaggerated foreign military and financial support to downplay the full cost of the war.

They ignored the advice of career military officials, like Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki, who suggested that an Iraqi occupation force should number 'several hundred thousand.'

The Defense Department pushed aside the State Department, which was more experienced and better prepared to help shape a post-war Iraq.

Most appallingly, the Administration and the Pentagon rushed our military into battle with inadequate supplies and support. Some 40,000 troops in the Iraqi theatre lacked protective plates for body armor vests. Portable electronic jammers for defeating roadside bombs were in woefully short supply. Only about 25 percent of the armored vehicles needed had been provided.

Today, U.S. forces are still short about 1,300 of the 4,000 armored Humvees needed in Iraq. Newsweek recently noted that: '[a]ccording to an unofficial study by a defense consultant that is now circulating through the Army, there have been 142 casualties by land mines or improvised explosive devices, while 48 others died in rocket propelled grenade attacks. Almost all of those soldiers were killed while in unprotected vehicles, which means that perhaps one in four of those killed in combat in Iraq might be alive if they had the stronger armor around them, the study suggested.'

Today, the United States Army is stretched to the breaking point. Many Army units have had their deployments extended well beyond the 12-month rotation called for by Defense Department policy. Some units are being called back to Iraq earlier than planned. The Army recently went into 'stop-loss,' which prevents officers or enlisted persons in certain specialties from departing the service even after they are eligible to leave. In effect, the Administration has instituted a 'stealth draft' what will prevent Americans who have served their country honorably from returning to civilian life.

These facts demand that the Congress exercise its Constitutional oversight responsibility more aggressively. Conducting that oversight requires receiving the Pentagon's best estimate of the cost of our engagement in Iraq for the next five years. These numbers are available and they should be provided to the Committee and the Congress, as this bill now requires.

To date, Congress has appropriated about \$150 billion in military and reconstruction funding for the Iraq conflict. It is undeniable that the additional \$25 billion provided in this bill for Iraq will not be the last dollars that the Iraq mission will require or that the Congress will provide. The total figure will likely swell to roughly a quarter of a trillion dollars for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, with the vast majority of that funding devoted to Iraq. To put this in perspective, a quarter of a trillion dollars would:

Pay for last year's Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development Departments bill, the Commerce, Justice and Senate Departments bill, and the Agriculture Department bill combined.

More than double the total amount the states spend on education.

Repair nearly every school in America that needs to be modernized.

The American people deserve a full accounting of the cost of the war in Iraq, and not on the installment plan. Since day one of the Iraq operation, the Administration's actions have been characterized by deception. I hope the Administration will take the opportunity they have been provided to have an honest conversation about the true cost of the Iraq mission. We owe the American people nothing less.

DAVE OBEY.